

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraphs [0114] and [0137] as follows:

[0114] In step S940, a determination is made whether the selected source image analysis result is indicative of a valid surface. For example, if the source image analysis result is a numerical surface-focus indicator result, this result is compared to a numerical threshold value, where only values exceeding the threshold value are taken to be indicative of a valid and adequately-focused surface for purposes of constructing the composite image. If the source image analysis result is not indicative of a valid surface, then operation returns to step S925. Otherwise, operation continues to step S945. Thus, in embodiments where the most appropriate numerical surface-focus indicator result in step S935 is the maximum result, then the result is a maximum result that also exceeds the threshold.

[0137] In step S965, each of the surface regions determined in the operations of the previous step ~~S984~~ S964 are analyzed to determine the average source image index for each surface region. For each surface region, the average source image index for that region is the average of all the source image indexes of all the spatial locations included in that region.